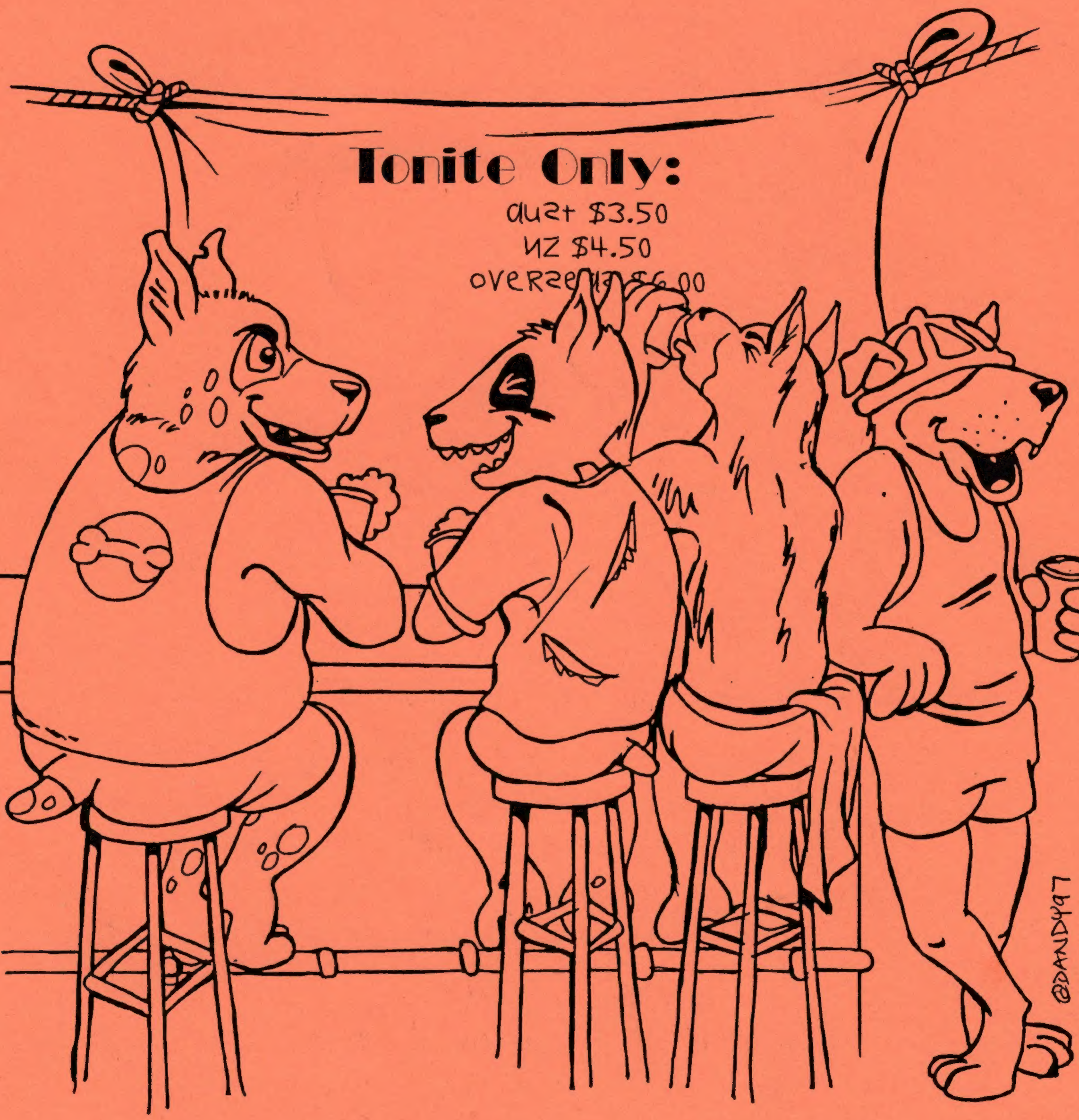
South Fur Lands

Issue 9



Down Under Caterwaulings

Issue 9

August 1997

Editorial

You Want To Be A *What*?

There's a definite totemism amongst furry fans; most everyone has a favorite species that they identify with. An odd thing about the Australasian furries is that almost no-one here identifies with any of the native species. Amongst the contributors to *SFL* and the "ozfurry" email list, I can think of multiple foxes, rats, weasels, wolves and sundry felines, but only one platypus and *not a single marsupial*. Only the avian people show any zoogeographic loyalty. Why?

Are the animals here just too dull for people to get excited about? Well, no: we have some of the most unusual and unique creatures anywhere, and there *are* marsupial fans living elsewhere in the world. (The only kangaroos in this issue are by Garden Sylvain, who lives in France.)

Perhaps it's because ever since exterminating the thylacine the only large predatory mammals in the region are introduced species. Furry fans everywhere seem to prefer animals near the top of the food chain, and unless you're willing to go for a bird or reptile, you have to go overseas to find one.

As an outpost of European/American culture transplanted into Oceania, there's even something appropriate about it. Our heads are full of mythology about cunning foxes, werewolves, *Pop Goes the Weasel* and *Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* rather than the Dreamtime stories, and it's what's in someone's head that determines their animal. Maybe the marsupial fans in far-off lands have a mythology about Australia in theirs.

Simon Raboczi

Submission Deadlines

Issue 10
30th September 1997

Issue 11
31st December 1997

In Memory

Fluffy

I know it's a common cat name but it's what my sister called her when I was only seven and she was five years younger than me.

She died on the 7th of July 1997, just 5 days shy of my 25th birthday. All I can think about now are the times we had together.

The way she would groom me or the way she would call for her meals.

She was buried out in the back yard in my parents' shed. A makeshift mausoleum you could say. I placed a rose upon her grave as remembrance. Just before writing this I finished crying and meowing my heart out.

That's how much I loved her.

May she rest in peace and wherever she is now may she be happy, I will miss her always.

Jason (Jagafeh) Gaffney

Our Valued Staff...

Jason Gaffney ..... Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
Simon Raboczi ..... Co-Publisher
Marko Laine ..... Editor/Layout

South Fur Lands

Issue 9

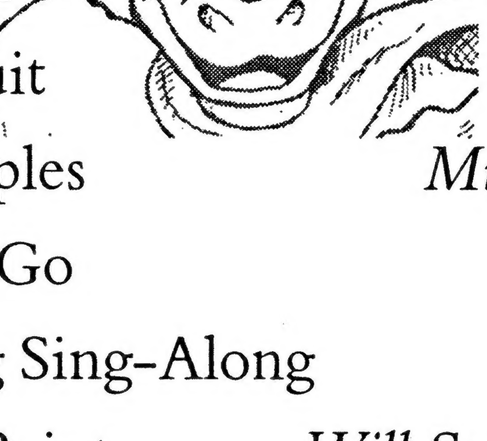
August 1997

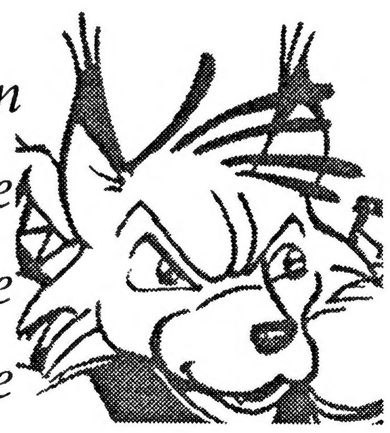


Watering Hole	*Marco Morales*	***Cover***
Hockey Roo	*Michael Thompson*	***1***
Medley	*Simon Raboczi*	***2***
Typing	*Marc Walters*	***3***
Watership Down Review	*Craig Hilton*	***4***
Talya	*Simon Raboczi*	***5***
Smugglers	*Amy Pronovost*	***6***
#1 Stud	*Amy Pronovost*	***7***
Fox-Shark	*Amy Pronovost*	***8***
Hot Pursuit	*Richard Harris*	***9***
Three Apples	*Miguel A. Estrugo Jr*	***10***
Give It A Go	*Grant Preston*	***16***
Lion King Sing-Along	*Grant Preston*	***17***
Turning Point	*Will Sanborn & Bernard Doove*	***18***
Evolution of the Species	*Scott Pollard*	***22***
Our Relationship	*Gerard Ashworth*	***23***
Cool Fox	*Marco Morales*	***24***
FoxFrenzy	*Marco Morales*	***25***
Darscenii	*Andrew Leitch*	***26***
Eagle Boys	*Grant Freckelton*	***27***
Speeding Fine	*Terry Knight*	***28***
Miel's Roos	*Garden Sylvain*	***29***
Oxygen	*Bernard Doove*	***30***
Skunktaur	*Bernard Doove*	***31***
Tail High, Creep!	*Bernard Doove*	***32***
Amara The Physiovixen	*Terry Knight*	***Back Cover***









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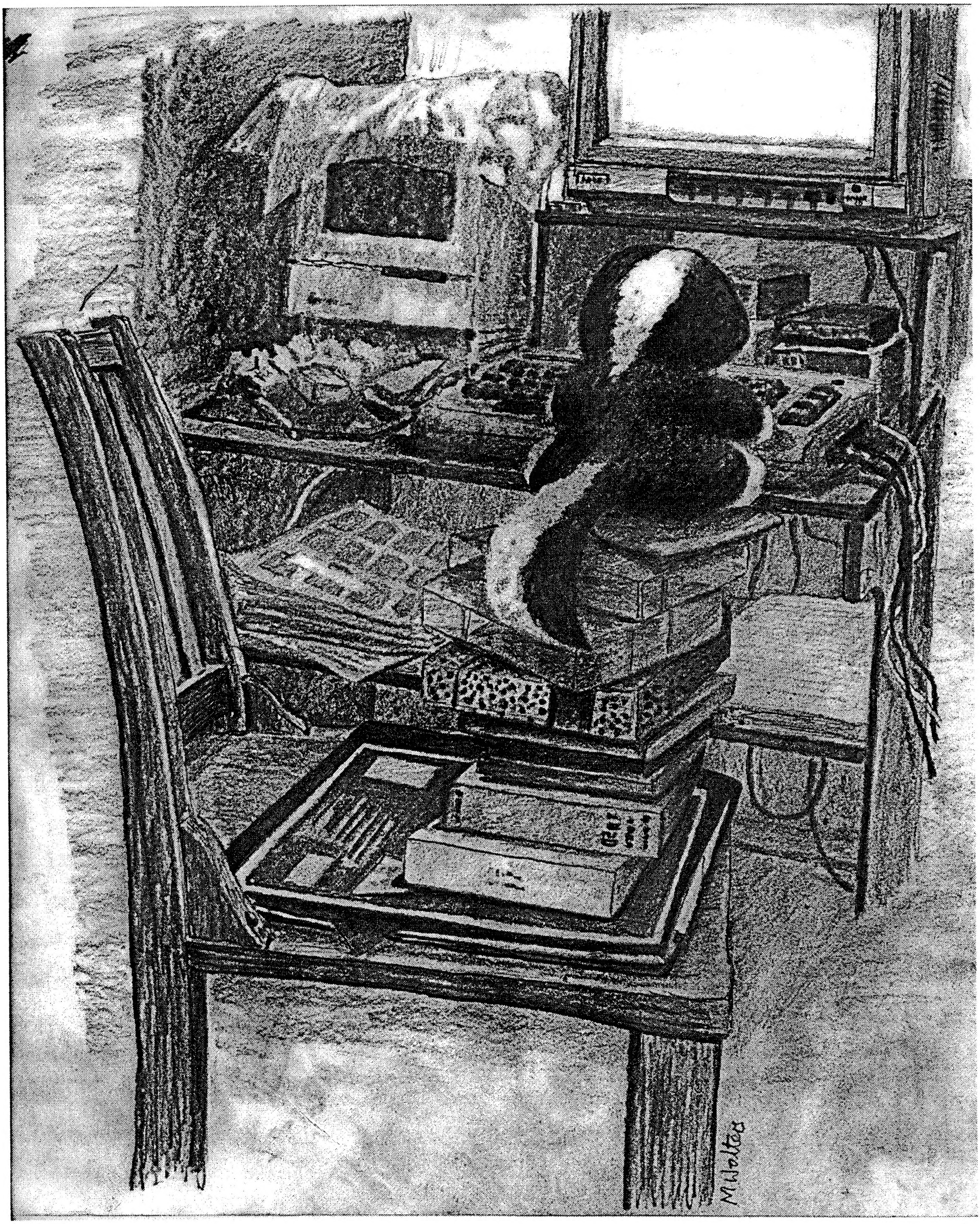
PRINTED IN AUSTRALIA





MEDLEY #6 **Simon Raboczi**

Portrait of the artist as a hybrid mustefelid lass; Medley is one of my internet MUD personas. I haven't got the hang of drawing clothing yet, so the pose is deviously chosen to keep her modest whilst still showing off the face and backstripes.



TYPING **Marc Walters**

The skunk, "Jill", was given to me by Chris Baird in return for sending a crate of furry comics back up to him after an extended loan—although he had to later threaten me with a good kneecapping to get back his *Albedo* and *Furrloughs*. (Erma Felna is sooo cool!)

Tales from Watership Down

by Richard Adams

Book Review by Craig Hilton

Let me air my bias from the start. No novel has had a greater impact on my life than *Watership Down*. It ranks with *The Lord of the Rings* and perhaps *Mrs Frisby and The Rats of NIMH* as one of the great formative influences on my consciousness, and when at the tender age of eighteen I entered its world of grass, flowers and hedgerows from a rabbit's-eye view I was struck by a *mélange* so potent that I have never seen nor felt the like since.

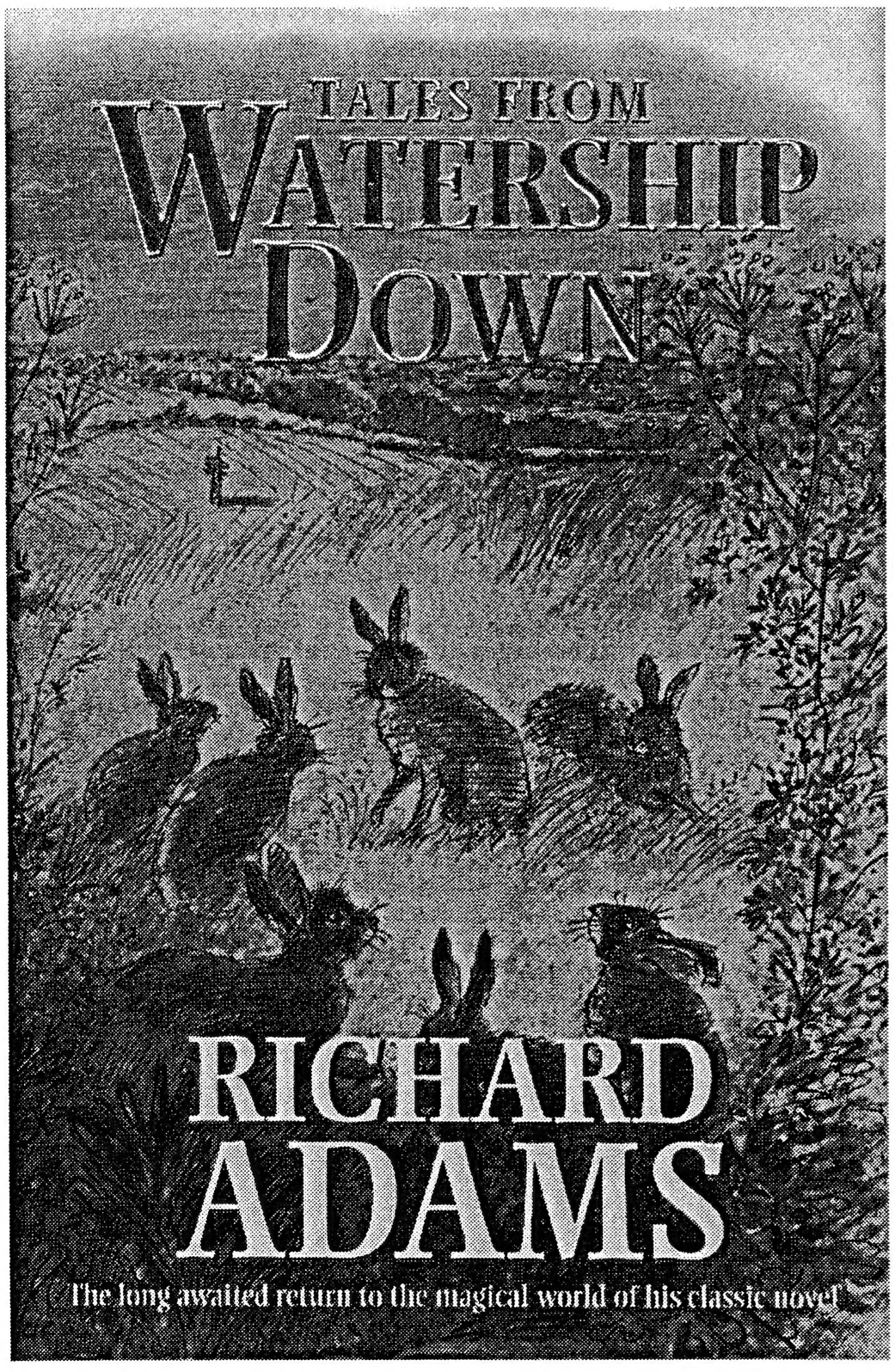
Was it Adams' skill as an author that did it, his luck to have been the first to stumble fortuitously into a receptive genre or my own late adolescent susceptibility? Or a bit of each? It does go without saying, as borne out of course by the tremendous success of the work—reprints, kudos, an animated movie—that I was not alone in my affection. A whole readership out there had been primed and waiting for the chance to delve into just this very type of experience, which could be best understood by what it was not. Not a children's story, not a realistic animal tale as described by an observing human, not an anthropomorphic animal-on-two-legs fable or allegory or political satire, but instead with all these overlays dispensed with, an epic of elegant simplicity—a compelling adventure told by rabbits about rabbits merely being rabbits.

The magic of it all resonates even today in my memory, its clarity of vision, and simplicity and vitality. Challenges may be dire and solutions heroic, but the path of life is uncomplicated and the shadow of mortality sudden. Life for the reader introduced into the lapine community might just as well be about eating grass and telling stories. Never even beginning to comprehend the vast complexity of the world you can bask in this idyll, sensing the intensity of life by the closeness of death which may hang on your ability to run or fight or think. For my part, then as now, *Watership Down* had hot blood.

And so it was. I haven't read any book since which for me has hit this exact same formula, not even *Duncton Wood* or *The Rectory Mice*. I haven't found any of Adams' stories to affect me similarly, not even *The Plague Dogs* or *Shardik*. So now I was about to confront the question that each and every devoted reader would probably ask in his or her own very personal way. Could Adams return to his first and greatest success and resnare the magic? Vindicate himself as an author or stand condemned as a milker of potboilers?

For the uninitiated, let me recount the details of *Watership Down*. A couple of rabbit outskirters in an old and established warren form a group to flee an impending disaster. Fiver has the vision and Hazel the reluctant leadership to undertake this quest, and through a series of narrow scrapes they all arrive safely at the promised land, which serves their needs perfectly in every way but one—no females to complement this all-male party. Hazel tries to get some from a farm and almost pays the ultimate price. Although Fiver comes to the rescue, Hazel now has had occasion to look the Black Rabbit in the face and is never the same thereafter. Another expedition finds doe rabbits aplenty in a warren farther afield, but unfortunately it's run by one General Woundwort, whose policies on internal and external affairs would not be unfamiliar to the Borg from *Star Trek*. The challenge is there, then, to stage a raid and liberate a bunch of does by means of a cunning covert operation. Success is theirs that day, but in response the General, never one to let things drop, leads a force of his own to obliterate Hazel's warren. The final conflict now has to be faced. Not so much army against army as comparisons of leadership, ingenuity and courage, and it would not be giving away too much to say that our side wins and everything ends more or less on a happy note.

I remember finding Adams' soapbox preaching on the nasty things Man is doing to the world more than a little intrusive in the storytelling, but when he was letting forth an understanding (heard subtly as an overtone) of the finer personal qualities that can be brought forward though adversity and by deliberate choice, he was at his finest. Hazel is leadership material, and while protesting his unpreparedness he shines in the role, earning not only the title of the warren's Chief Rabbit but showing himself to be the wisest, most ingenious and most just of all Chief Rabbits anywhere, a carnal embodiment of the semi-mythical El-ahrairah. It is through the leadership of Ha-



zel-rah that each rabbit feels an indispensable part of the team, is organised to work in a coordinated effort and ultimately rises to his or her finest performance. Thus, together they are invincible. This in particular is the quality that has made a good book great.

I think it was a wise move not to attempt to cap the original with a sequel *per se*. More quests and battles would have overstated the point. Instead we are invited back to the rabbits' world simply to experience it, in snatches and snippets. *Tales From Watership Down* is exactly that—a gathering of short stories for those who long to experience the magical charm again. Most are the stories told by rabbits (about the audacious exploits of El-ahrairah), and the remainder are updated tidings on the fare of Hazel, Fiver and all the rest of the warren at The Honeycomb. As enjoyable as the first sections are, it is really with the third and final set that I got back into the fashion of nibbling blades of grass and keeping a weather eye out for The Thousand Enemies. More than that—I began to realise the warm affection I was starting to feel in the rediscovery of old friends. So the power is still there, but is it in the book, or Adams, or me? In truth, I'm still no closer.

By contrast to all the events of great import that had passed hitherto, Tales gives us personalities and housekeeping, purely and simply. It says something then that these short stories held my interest and that the commonplace problems of the rabbits were as gripping in their attention to minutiae as any momentous struggle. I think that's really in the essence of the spell—rabbitty little brains hold rabbitty little thoughts, even if they be fixed prejudices or overvalued ideas. It's the close-up view which purifies and clarifies. One sees the problem laid bare, as Hazel-rah can, then gives it the power to choose between the qualities, say, of constancy and obsession, prudence and paranoia, tolerance and laxity, discipline and oppression. We watch as a mean spirit drinks only bile, while justice and fair dealing reap rich rewards.

We come away from *Tales* feeling something essentially right can exist in the world. Adams may certainly give us another collection like this one if he should wish. As irrational as it may seem, I'd just like to catch up on how Hazel-rah and my other friends are getting on.

Tales from Watership Down by Richard Adams, Hutchinson, 1996 (printed by Random House, 198 pages, hardback Aus$29.95)





SMUGGLERS

Amy Pronovost

An SF/*Star Wars* related piece. <grin> I like drawing spotty-kitties and has anyone else noticed how many felines there are in SF?

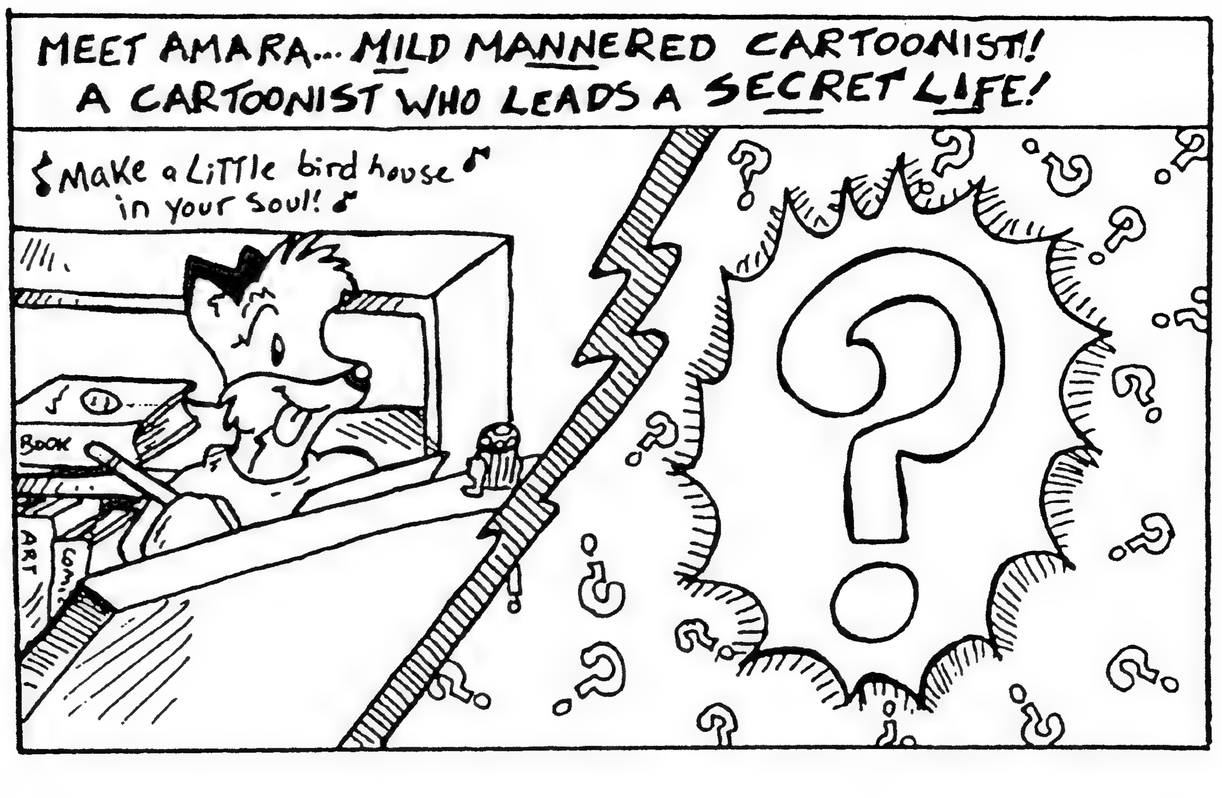


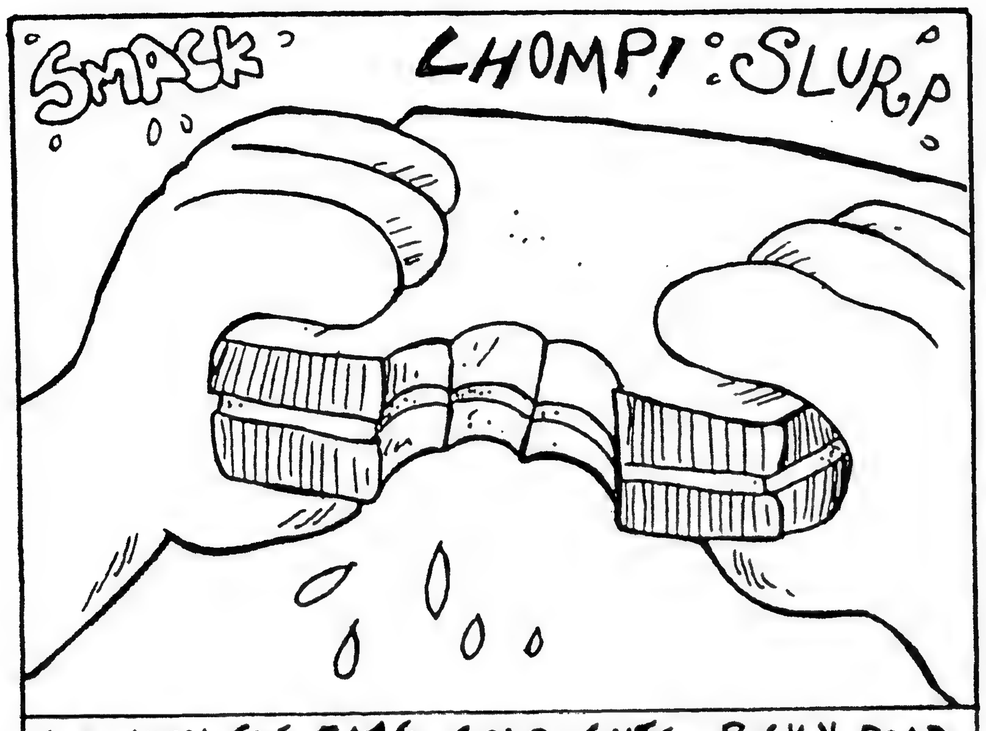
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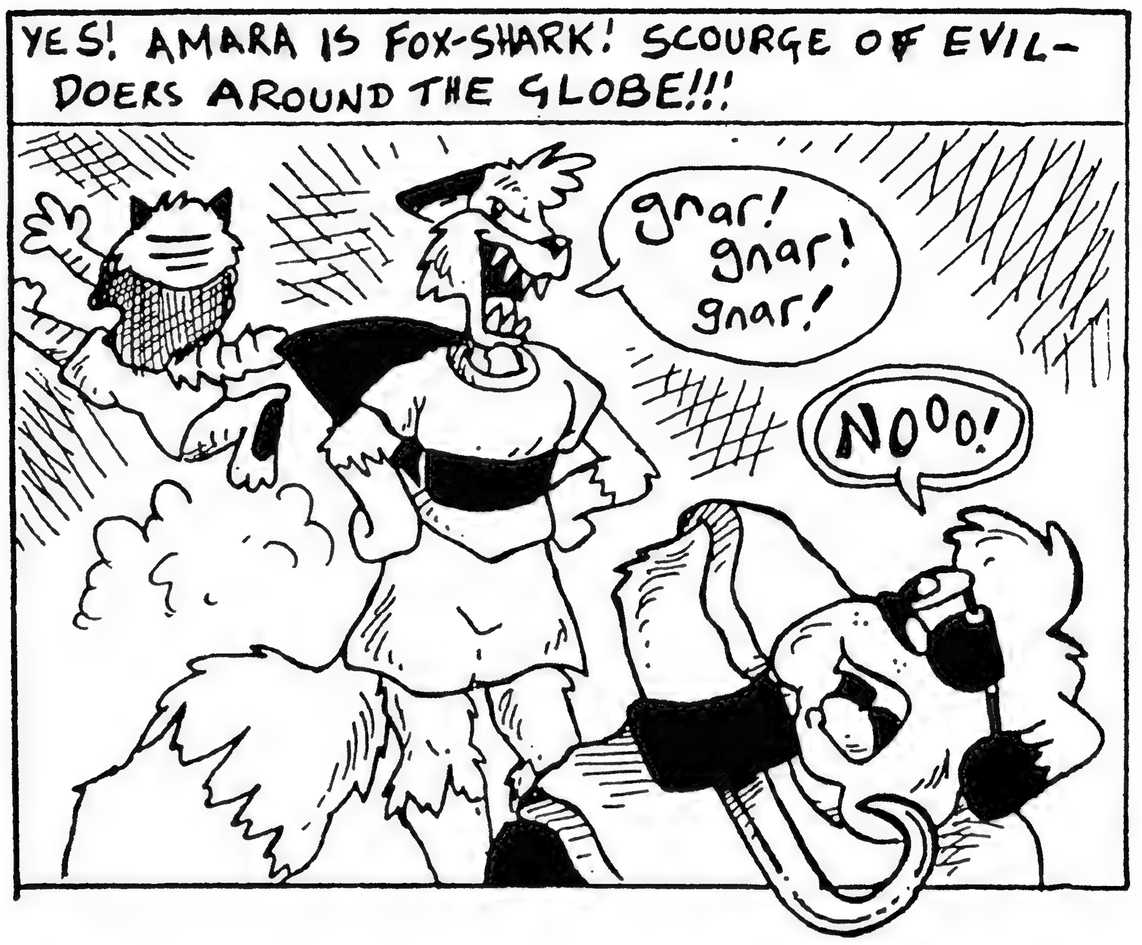
Amy Pronovost

I drew this after I found out that *Greener Pastures* had received two OzCon awards! Woohoo!


THE ADVENTURES OF FOX-SHARK!
gnar gnar gnar
©1997 A.PRONOVOST


MEET AMARA... MILD MANNERED CARTOONIST!
A CARTOONIST WHO LEADS A SECRET LIFE!
♪Make a little bird house in your soul!♪
BOOK
ART
?

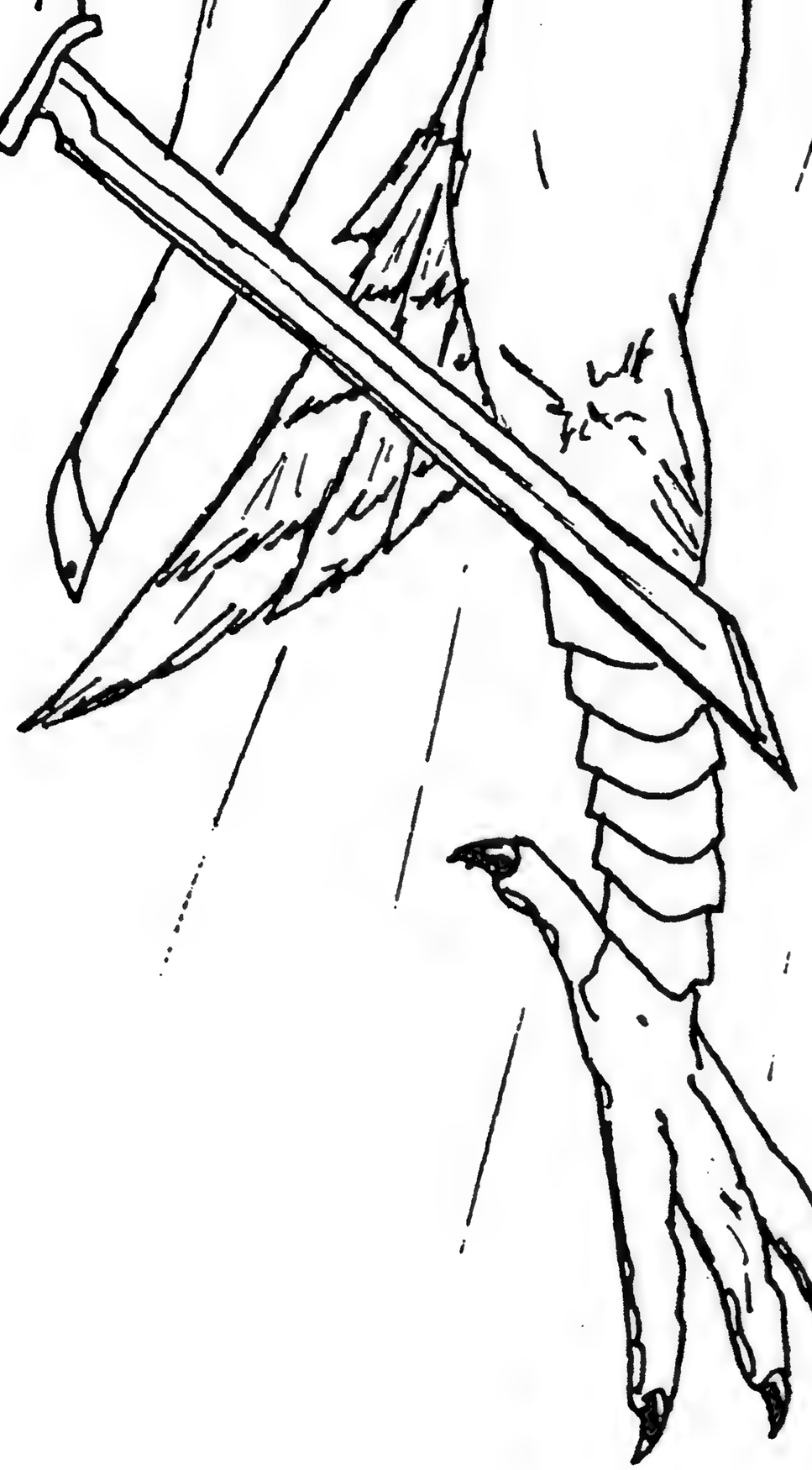

SMACK
CHOMP! SLURP
FOR WHEN SHE EATS COLD-CUTS, ROCKY ROAD ICE CREAM, TRIX OR QUICHE... SHE BECOMES A FEARSOME ♪CREATURE!♫


YES! AMARA IS FOX-SHARK! SCOURGE OF EVIL-DOERS AROUND THE GLOBE!!!
gnar! gnar! gnar!
NOOO!


STALKING THE CITY BY NIGHT FOR CRIMINALS AND THE OCCASIONAL MIDNIGHT SNACK!
mm... HOTDOG gnar gnar gnar


FOX-SHARK! FIGHTING FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE AND PROCESSED FOOD BY-PRODUCTS EVERYWHERE!!
CHEEZ STUFF
CHIK'N CHUNX
OUR HEEERO!


COMING SOON TO A DELI COUNTER NEAR YOU!
HIDE YOUR COLD CUTS!!
gnar?
MC DELI
END?



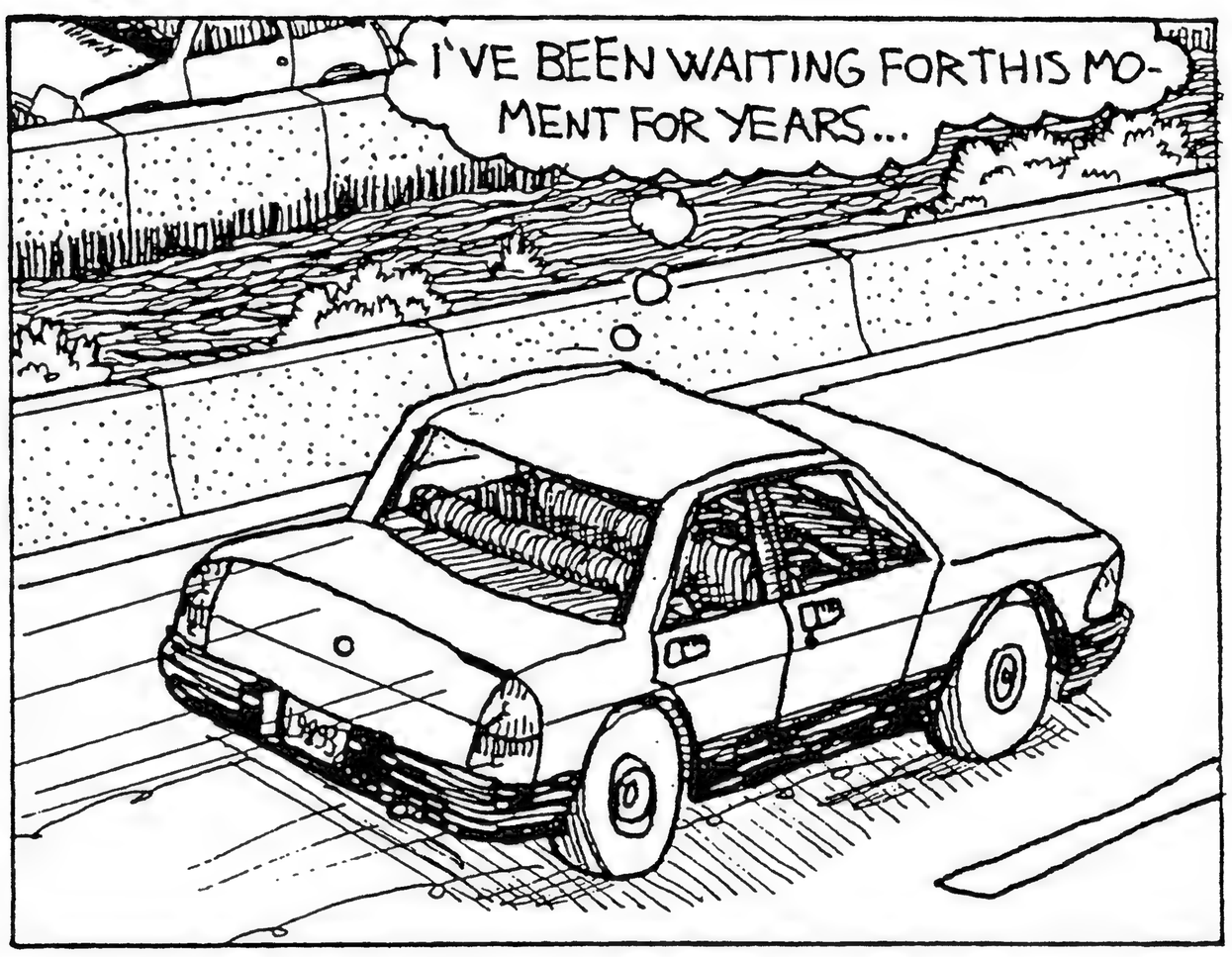


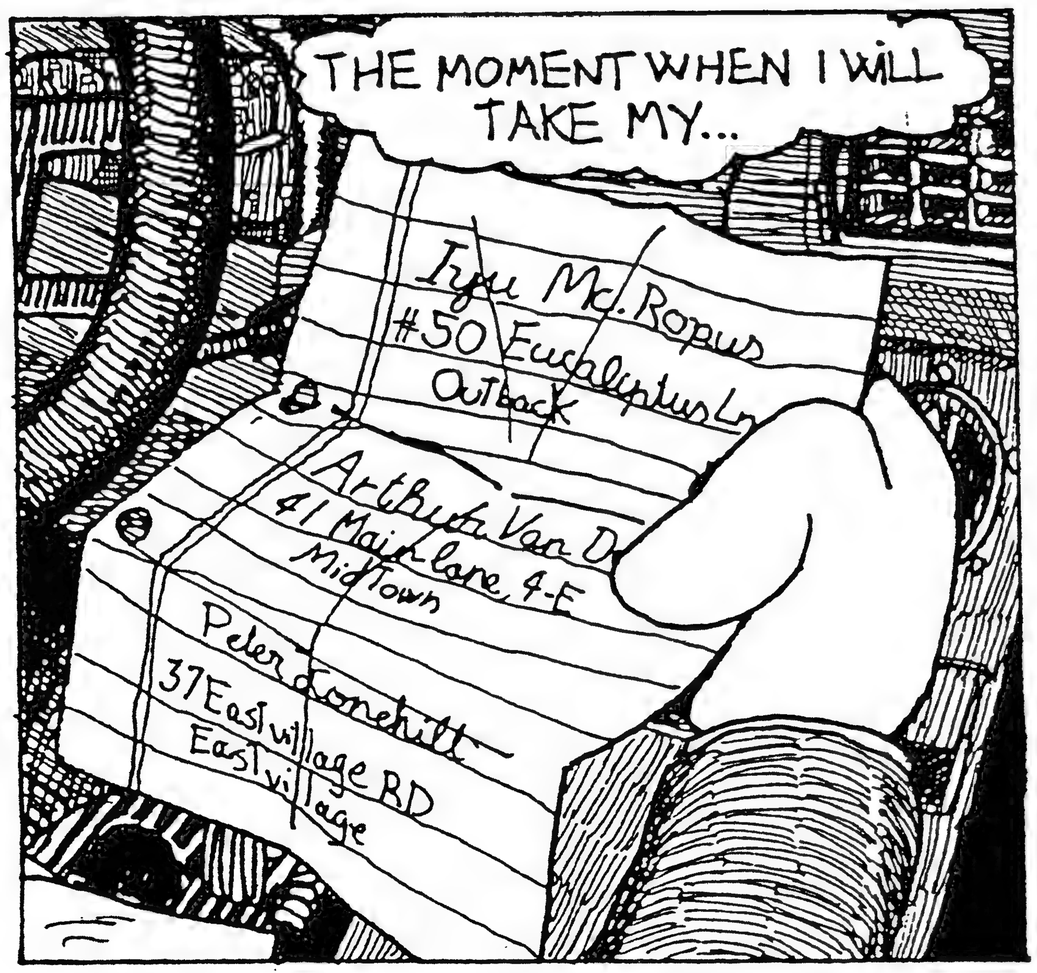
THREE APPLES

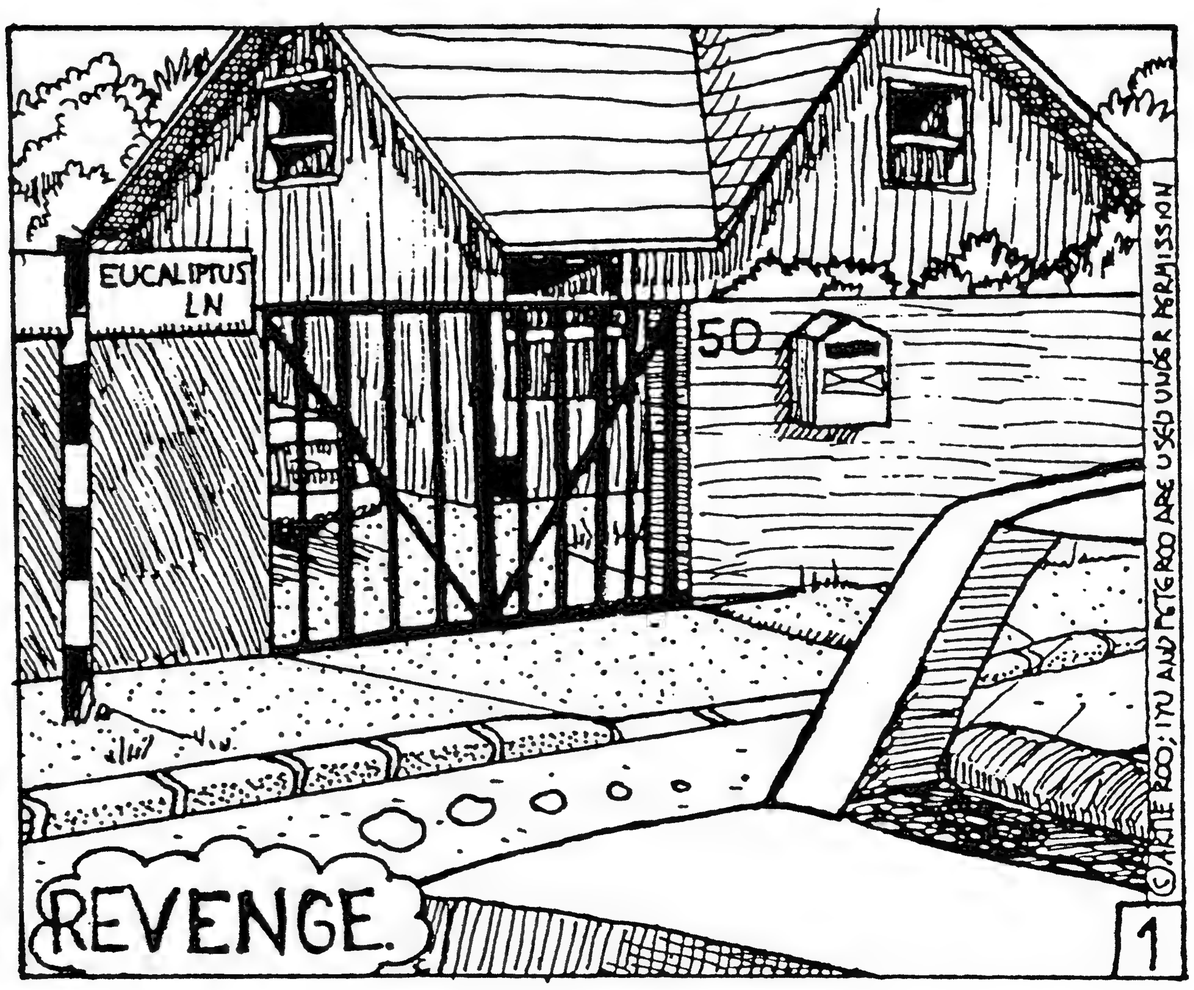
by Miguel A. Estrugo Jr











...IN OUR MAP, WE FIND THIS LOWER PRESSURE SYSTEM, IT WILL AFFECT US WITH LOWER...

KNOCK KNOCK

THAT'S MY SISTER.

HOW STRANGE, SHE KNOCKS THE DOOR WHEN SHE HAS THE KEYS. BAH, MAYBE SHE FORGOT THE KEYS IN HER ROOM.

HEY, ISABELLE, HAVE YOU BOUGHT THE NEWSPA...

MR. IYU Mc. ROPUS, I SUPPOSE...

UH... YES... NICE TO MEET YOU... MR...

PAUL CHANDIA. AND SIT IN THAT SOFA.

BAM

SURE... ER... MAY I ASK YOU IF THIS IS A JOKE?

NOT AT ALL. LET ME EXPLAIN MYSELF...

I CAME FROM CRITHIA TO KILL YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARTIE AND PETER.

BUT, WHY? WHAT WE'VE DONE FOR THAT?

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, YOU VISITED MY COUNTRY. YOU RENTED A CAR TO GO FROM CITY TO CITY.

ERR... YES, YOU'RE RIGHT...

AND IN A CERTAIN SPOT OF THE ROAD, YOU STOPPED TO GET SOME FRUIT FROM AN APPLE TREE...

CRUNCH CRUNCH

THAT TREE WAS IN MY FARM.

I SAW YOU GETTING THESE FRUIT, BUT I WAS BUSY TO CARE ABOUT THAT...

BLEE-EAT

WHAT?! YOU WANT TO KILL ME AND MY FRIENDS JUST. BECAUSE WE ATE THREE APPLES!?

SHUT UP! I HAVEN'T FINISHED!

A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER. I GOT SEVERE DEBTS PLAYING 'MONOPOLY'. I SAID I WOULD PAY THE OTHER WEEK, COS I'D START MY APPLE PICK...

OK. PAY ME THE NEXT WEEK.

...SO I WENT TO BED CONFIDENT IN HAVING A NICE PICK. THE RAIN WAS EXCELLENT THAT YEAR...

AND I WOKE UP WITH A TERRIBLE FACT...

ALL MY APPLES WERE LOST! 3

I CALLED MY INSURANCE COMPANY...

1-800-FRAUD KLIT KLIT KLAT KLAT

...AND THEY CAME TO VERIFY WHY MY APPLE TREES DIED.

MMM... STRANGE. I'LL GET A SAMPLE AND WE'LL FIND WHAT HAPPENED.

WE'VE FOUND A STRANGE VIRUS ON YOUR FRUIT TREES. IT'S THE 'POMAPHILOS MACROPORTIS', IT'S THE FIRST CASE WE'VE DETECTED IN THIS REGION.

!?

THE VIRUS IS HOSTED BY MARSUPIALS, AND IT'S HARMLESS, EXCEPT FOR APPLE TREES, LIKE YOURS. IT HAS DEVASTATING EFFECTS. AH! YOUR INSURANCE HAS NO COVERAGE FOR 'EXOTIC ILLNESSES' LIKE THIS, SO YOU WON'T SEE A CENT FROM US... BYE, AND THANKS FOR USING FRAUD INSURANCES!-

MARSUPIALS... LIKE KANGAROOS... LIKE YOU.

AAGH AAGH

THAT MADE ME HATE KANGAROOS.

AND THAT WASN'T THE WORST PART.

WHERE IS MY MONEY?

THE... MONEY? ER... WELL

SINCE I KNOW HOW TO DEAL IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS, I POSTPONED THE PAYMENT UNTIL I HAD ENOUGH CASH...

NOW LISTEN TO ME! EVERY DAY YOU DON'T PAY, YOU DOUBLE THE DEBT! UNDERSTOOD?

OK

I HAD TO SELL MY FARM TO PAY THE DEBT.

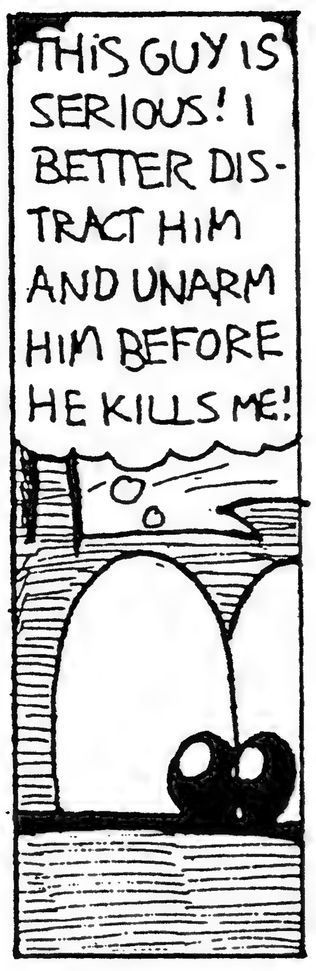
OKAY... I TAKE IT. YOU HAVE TWO HOURS TO PACK YOUR THINGS AND GO.

YOU.... MADE ME LOSE EVERYTHING I HAD!

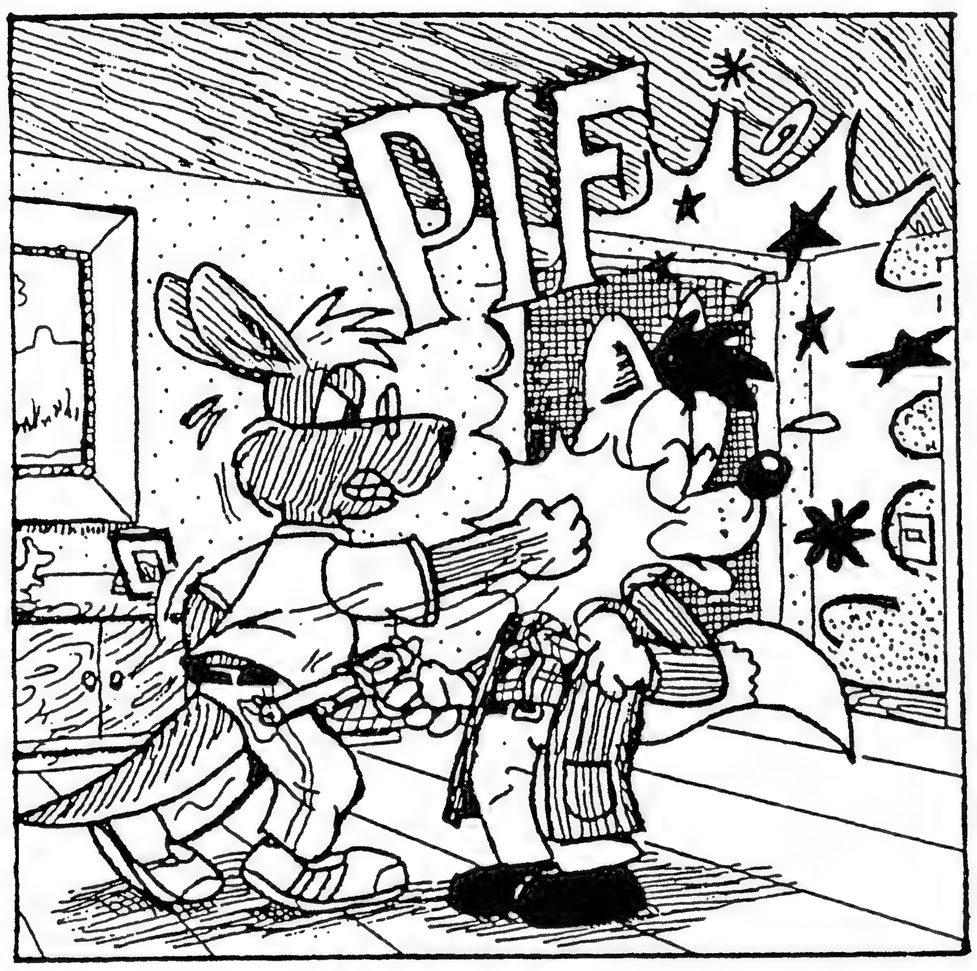
GLLP!

4


BE CAREFUL WITH THAT GUN!...YOU COULD HURT SOMEBODY...
I KNOW, YOU SILLY!


THIS GUY IS SERIOUS! I BETTER DISTRACT HIM AND UNARM HIM BEFORE HE KILLS ME!


OOOH! LOOK! A FLY WITH PROPELLER!
UH? WHERE?


PIF


DROP THAT GUN!
WHY, YOU SON OF A FLYER!!


I DONT NEED NO GUNS TO DEFEAT YOU!
EEEP!

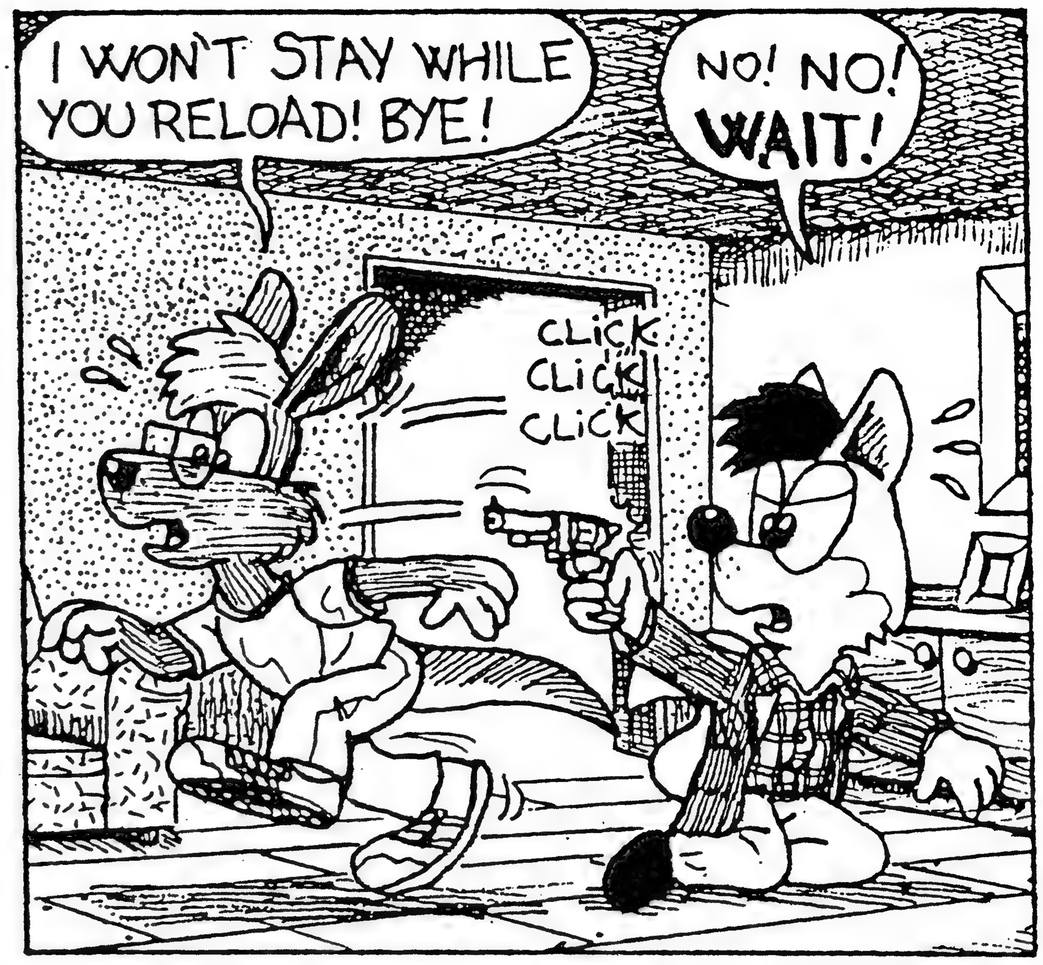

FLY A LITTLE!
A LA-A-A-A-ACK


I FORGOT TO TELL YOU I WAS GREEN BERRET!
POF


AND NOW, YOU DIE... BYE, IYU!
5

















TO BE CONTINUED...



GIVE IT A GO **Grant Preston**

Okay, the whole story. It's no great secret that I got more than a little sloshed at Conspiracy. Then Sebkha asked me to draw a picture in his sketchpad. About half an hour later, after further inebriation, he asked me to do it again. To everyone's surprise, least of all mine, it was better than the first. Mayfurr speculated (see last issue) that if they poured enough alcohol into me, I might draw as good as Terrie Smith. Don't I wish... hence the above. <smile>



The Evidence...





L-R : GOLDFUR, CHRIS, LINDGOLD, SEBKHA, MAYFURR, HAAL, JAGAFEH.
© THEIR RESPECTIVE PLAYERS

"LION KING
CONSPIRACY

LION KING SING-ALONG

For those of you who weren't at *Conspiracy*, this actually happened. Playing
Merchandise" filk in it, and we all sung it accompanying the tune on the vide



Grant Preston

The Lion King on video one night, Mayfurr dug out a 'zine with the "Can You See The o. It's a real feat to sing and not laugh your head off at the lyrics at the same time...

Turning Point



Will A. Sanborn

by Will A. Sanborn
illustrated by Bernard Doove
Chakats created by Bernard Doove



© 7/97 B Doove

Ambereyes paused in hir walking as shi came upon the edge of the small playground. Stopping, the chakat looked upon the small group of children from the colony's diverse range of species that was there. As shi watched them happily playing together hir ears drooped slightly. Out of all the places to go, why had hir wanderings taken hir here? Hadn't shi wanted to stay away from things that would remind hir of hir loss? The cat-taur's tail flickered nervously.

It had been several weeks since the accident, but the pain was still strong within hir. It shouldn't have happened, but they'd both known the risks when they'd signed up for the contract. When a routine survey mission had discovered rich veins of precious heavy metals on Ceres Beta, several companies had scrambled for the opportunity to exploit it. Ceres Beta was primarily an agricultural colony, but it was possible to mine the world for its riches without disturbing the colonists too much. The settlements of the planet were small and luckily the largest veins of the precious ores were located away from the larger communities. Of course some farmers living in the outskirts had to sell their land, but at a tidy profit. The land was still plentiful, and it was easy enough to relocate farms along the planet's wide temperate zones.

A terran company had won most of the mining rights to the new world, and Ambereyes and hir mate Swiftpounce had been along with the first wave of workers sent to the colony to start the mining operations. It was their second stint off-world, moving from one colony to another. They'd left Chakona a couple of years ago to make their fortunes, hoping to return before too long, to settle down and raise a family.

Their current stint looked like it was going to provide them with just that opportunity. The two of them had been lucky in the fact that they'd been working on a colony much closer to Ceres Beta than Earth was. The mining operations on that colony were run by the same corporation which had won the mineral rights to the new claim. Because of the richness of the mineral deposits and the profits to be made, the company was eager to get workers to Ceres Beta as quickly as possible. Those to sign on at first got huge bonuses.

The setup was perfect, they could do the same jobs they'd been doing, but for close to three times the salary. They'd already collected up a rather tidy nest egg, saving most of their pay since while living on the company's bases, most of the expenses were paid for. As long as you didn't spend your money foolishly on imported commodities, it wasn't too hard to grow a good-sized bank account.

They'd been shrewd and saved so much, and had begun thinking of going back home, returning to their family and friends back on Chakona. They were a little over a third of the way through their six-month contract on Ceres Beta when they decided they wouldn't renew their options when the time came. They'd already made a nice sum of money, and it was likely that now that the urgency to the situation had passed, the company wouldn't be paying out the same high salaries for the next season's contracts.

After talking it out, they'd finally decided on it. They'd been away for too long, and it was time to go home. As a celebration of their decision, Swiftpounce had asked Ambereyes to impregnate hir the next time shi reached the peak of hir fertility cycle. They were looking forward to using their amassed savings to retire back to Chakona and to more-normal jobs, and were both ready for the gift of cubs. The two of them couldn't wait until they'd be proud parents with a child of their own.

At the time it had seemed so right, the timing was almost perfect. Swiftpounce could easily work while shi was a few months pregnant and there were no company regulations against it. They'd already decided to return home in a few months anyway, and what better way to start a new life than with the promise of a new addition to their family.

Now of course, shi could see the bitter folly to their thinking and how careless their decision had been. Even with the latest mining machinery and the highest safety standards mandated by the corporate policies, equipment could still malfunction. Accidents still could and did happen. Shi and Swiftpounce had seen one on their previous contract, but even that hadn't been as serious as the one which had struck hir mate.

It had been another day, just like the rest of them. Ambereyes was busy helping to run the computers in the operations center as usual. That was hir area of expertise, monitoring the readouts from the sensor scans, following the mining progress and working at fine-tuning efficiency procedures. Swiftpounce on the other hand was involved in the actual mining operations, having been trained on the latest equipment the company used. Shi was in that section of the mine that day when the accident occurred, and shi'd been caught in the middle of the devastation.

Ambereyes had heard the alarm sound and was very quick to respond to it, rushing to the terminal, hir worry controlled by stoic professionalism. It wasn't until shi found out where the accident had occurred and to what extent the danger was that shi lost hir composure. Shi'd frantically tried to reach Swiftpounce on the com-link, but it was hopeless, all shi got was cold static.

Shi hadn't been able to get down to the mine of course, it was off limits while the rescue team worked so hard to try and do their job. After they'd cleared away all the rubble, only one survivor had remained. Of the human, the fox-morph and Swiftpounce who'd been caught in the accident, only the fox had survived, and even he was in critical condition for a couple of days.

Ambereyes was devastated. Not only had shi lost hir mate, but in one quick blink of an eye, fate had taken their unborn cub away from hir as well. Swiftpounce had only been ten weeks pregnant, but the two of them could still sense the life growing within hir. They'd talked about it so much, planning what their new life would be like when they got home and could welcome the arrival of their cub.

Now it was all gone, all their dreams, all their hopes, wiped out in one single moment of disaster. Ambereyes had chosen to have Swiftpounce cremated, not wishing to have hir buried alone on Ceres Beta, so shi could take hir mate's ashes home to Chakona with hir. Shi'd gone through a simple memorial service attended by many of the miners, but it just wasn't the same without any chakats present.

Because they were part of the first wave of miners to the planet, Ambereyes and Swiftpounce had been the only

chakats in their group. There were other chakats at other mining installations scattered around the planet, but even the nearest one was still over fifteen-hundred kilometers away. It was hard to arrange for a transfer to a different location, because the company was strapped for personnel as it was. They'd been understanding of hir loss and had given hir a leave from work, but it still wasn't enough.

The mourning had been extremely hard on hir without the support of family and friends. Sure shi was close to some of the other miners, and they did help to comfort hir some, but without the closeness of hir own kind shi was lost in hir depression. Communication with home was very slow and didn't even come close to a real-time conversation. It helped a little, but not enough. To make matters worse, it was still almost two months before a transport ship with a flight route going near Chakona was due in. There was a transport ship of new arrivals coming around in a few weeks, but that was from Earth, and shi didn't know what the possibility of there being any chakats on board was.

Finally shi'd returned back to work, trying to keep busy. Shi could keep hir mind occupied during the day, but the same sad, familiar thoughts returned to hir at night. Shi'd gone out walking that evening, hoping to try and clear hir mind, and in hir wanderings had come upon the playground. It was a small playground for the children of workers at the mining installation. Many of the miners of course didn't have children, but some did and given the lush setting of Ceres Beta, it wasn't a bad place to have your family stay at while you made your fortune.

The playground was smaller than one available at larger settlements and it didn't have the trappings of those in a more standard community-oriented setting, but the children still enjoyed it. Playing on the few pieces of equipment the playground had, and running along the wide expanse of grass, they didn't seem any worse for wear living in the mining colony. Most of them probably thought it was just one big adventure anyway.

Watching the cubs of a few different races play amongst themselves and then looking over to see their mothers watching them contentedly as they played, Ambereyes felt familiar stirrings of hir loss eating away at hir. It wasn't fair, shi was supposed to get a chance to do this with hir cub and to share the experience with Swiftpounce, but now that was all gone.

Shi felt the tears beginning to sting at hir eyes when shi noticed a young fox girl looking at hir from a distance. Shi watched the little vixen for a few moments before the cub starting running towards hir. The pangs of panic rumbling in hir stomach, Ambereyes froze, uncertain of what to do. Once again shi wondered what shi was doing there and how shi was going to handle the impending encounter.

Shi couldn't just turn and run, not with the cub hurrying towards hir so eagerly, hir chakat sense of amicability wouldn't let hir do that. It overwhelmed hir discomfort, freezing hir in place.

In the space of ten or fifteen seconds the cub had reached hir. Stopping, pausing to look up at the chakat, the young fox just gazed upon hir with an expression of awe that only a child could muster. Ambereyes still felt the wetness to hir eyes and shi reached up to discretely try and wipe the light tears from them. If the cub had noticed, she paid no heed to the chakat's actions.

"You're a chakat aren't you?" the fox asked hir excitedly.

"Yes I am," Ambereyes breathed out softly, nodding as shi did so.

"I knew it. Daddy said there were some of you here, but I've never seen any of you until today. Yay, you're so neat with those extra paws you have..."

Ambereyes couldn't help but crack a smile at that, even if it was only a faint one. "Well then little one, I'm glad to meet you. My name's Ambereyes, you can call me Amber for short though. What's you're name?"

"Oh, I'm Sara. Pleased to meet you Amber." The little fox's smile was infectious and Ambereyes felt hir ears perking up and hir tail beginning to twitch. Just then shi also saw the cub's mother walking over to them, looking on with an expression of slight concerned on her face. Ambereyes was glad that shi'd recovered hir composure and shi managed a slight smile at the older vixen.

"It is so neat how you walk with four paws like that... I bet you'd give great horsey rides," Sara hinted at innocently.

"Sara, don't be rude to the nice chakat now. That's a fine thing to ask hir for" the cub's mother blurted out. From the look on her face, her embarrassment was quite obvious.

"No, it's okay" Ambereyes heard hirself say, and before shi even knew what shi was doing hir old gregarious nature had come out. "I think I can give you a horsey ride. I've never done it before, but I think we can try it." Shi realized quickly enough what an awkward position shi'd placed hirself in. However, shi couldn't really back out of it and the expectant look on the child's face melted much of hir doubts away.

Sara giggled enthusiastically at the chakat's offer and was oblivious to her mother's concerns, her tail wagging excitedly. Ambereyes looked up at the older vixen and let hir expression show the woman that everything was alright. Once the cub's mother was convinced Ambereyes bent down to gingerly pick the eager cub up in hir arms, and place the small fox on hir back.

Hesitating, feeling a little awkward and foolish, shi chuckled softly to hirself and took a step forward. Easily getting used to the light added weight of hir precious cargo, Ambereyes began to walk forward normally. Easing into the swing of things, shi then added just a slight bounce to hir step so shi'd gently rock Sara as shi moved along. The cub's giggles were obvious feedback that she was enjoying the game.

"Wheeee, you're great at this Amber. You're even better than Daddy... Faster please," Sara asked, with just a small amount of an order in her voice.

Ambereyes was happy to comply with the little fox's wishes. Shi was surprised at just how much fun shi was having with this little cub, it was some of the personal contact shi'd so sorely needed lately. It came from an unexpected source, and not exactly something shi would've thought of, but it was working. For a few moments at least hir mind was at ease and shi could simply enjoy play-

ing with Sara. The fact that the little girl had singled hir out as a special playmate touched hir.

Shi continued to play the part for the darling little cub, prancing over the grass at the commands of hir rider, hir tail moving gracefully with hir body's movements. Shi even bucked lightly a few times to hear the squeals of Sara's excitement as the cub held onto on hir shoulders for support. Ambereyes kept the game going until of the rest of the children at the playground had noticed the spectacle and soon came over to get a better look it.

Seeing the small crowd that had gathered around hir, the chakat slowed hir movements. "I think that's enough for now kiddo," shi said as shi came to a stop.

"Awww, okay... Thank you amber, that was great." The little fox hugged hir tightly for a couple of moments, then jumped down off hir back.

"Can I have a ride next?" one of the other children in the group, a human boy, asked.

Looking at his hopeful expression and those of the rest of the children, the chakat gave him a small, apologetic smile, hir ears flickering a little nervously. "Ummm, not right now. I think I need a break, but maybe later, okay?"

The boy nodded disappointedly, but accepted hir postponement without much fuss. Hesitating briefly, Ambereyes walked slowly away from the group. Leaving them, shi saw the children move onto something else, a new game having caught their attention. Sara's mother walked next to hir and they headed for a nearby bench. The vixen took a seat on it while Ambereyes sat down on hir hind legs, keeping hir head at the same level as the fox's.

"I really should apologize for Sara's impulsiveness, she isn't usually that pushy..." the vixen began.

"No, it's okay, it was enjoyable."

The fox woman breathed a slight sigh of relief, then hurriedly replied with, "Oh, I never caught your name. I'm Jess."

"Ambereyes... You have a wonderful daughter, Jess."

"Thanks. She can be a handful at times, but I love her." Seeing Ambereyes' contented smile, she continued. "Have you ever thought about having cubs yourself? You'd be perfect with them."

The chakat's expression changed abruptly, and she saw hir mood darken visibly. Her mind struggling to figure out what she could have possibly said wrong Jess' own face slackened, her ears drooping slightly. "Something happened to you, didn't it... something bad?"

Ambereyes only nodded dully, and a moment later the answer jumped into the vixen's mind. "Oh no, there was a chakat that died in that accident wasn't there... shi was your mate wasn't shi?"

"Yes," Ambereyes croaked out. "Shi was carrying our cub when it happened, and now I've lost them both..."

Jess watched as the chakat's eyes began to fill with tears once again. Hir sobs soon followed, soft and low, but still powerful. Stunned by the unforeseen revelation, her mind shaking with its implications, the vixen watched on helplessly. She felt her own eyes watering as she saw the tears streaming down Ambereyes' cheeks.

Finally, choking back her guilt, she managed to speak. "I'm so sorry... It was my husband who was the survivor from it... You must really hate me..." Her gaze dropped downward as she finished.

"Oh no... No, of course not," Ambereyes whispered. "In fact meeting you has been the closest contact I've had with someone in quite some time..." Reaching out, shi gently took the vixen's hand in hirs, looking back at Jess as she looked up at hir.

They stayed like that for several minutes, the shared silence between them easing the situation. Ambereyes' crying died down slowly and shi wiped the tears from hir cheeks, drying hir eyes. Looking at hir, Jess could still see the sadness shi carried within hir, but she also felt that their shared warmth was doing the chakat's heart some good.

Eventually the children got interested in the new arrival once again and wandered over to where the two adults were sitting. Jess glanced over at Ambereyes to try and get a grasp on hir feelings for the situation, but she couldn't read hir face. The chakat watched the group approaching with what could be a mix of both longing and nervousness, hir lips curling upward ever so slightly.

"Can Amber play with us again now?" Sara asked enthusiastically as she and the other kids approached. The rest of the children smiled hopefully up at the chakat.

"I don't think that's such a good idea right now honey," Jess answered, the nervousness evident in her voice.

"Awww Mom, please...?" the cub pleaded.

Seeing the little fox's needy expression, which was mirrored on the faces of the other children, Ambereyes gave in to the request. "It's okay Jess, I'm up for it... and I think I'd like that." Shi gave hir new friend a bittersweet smile, then focused hir attention on the kids in front of hir.

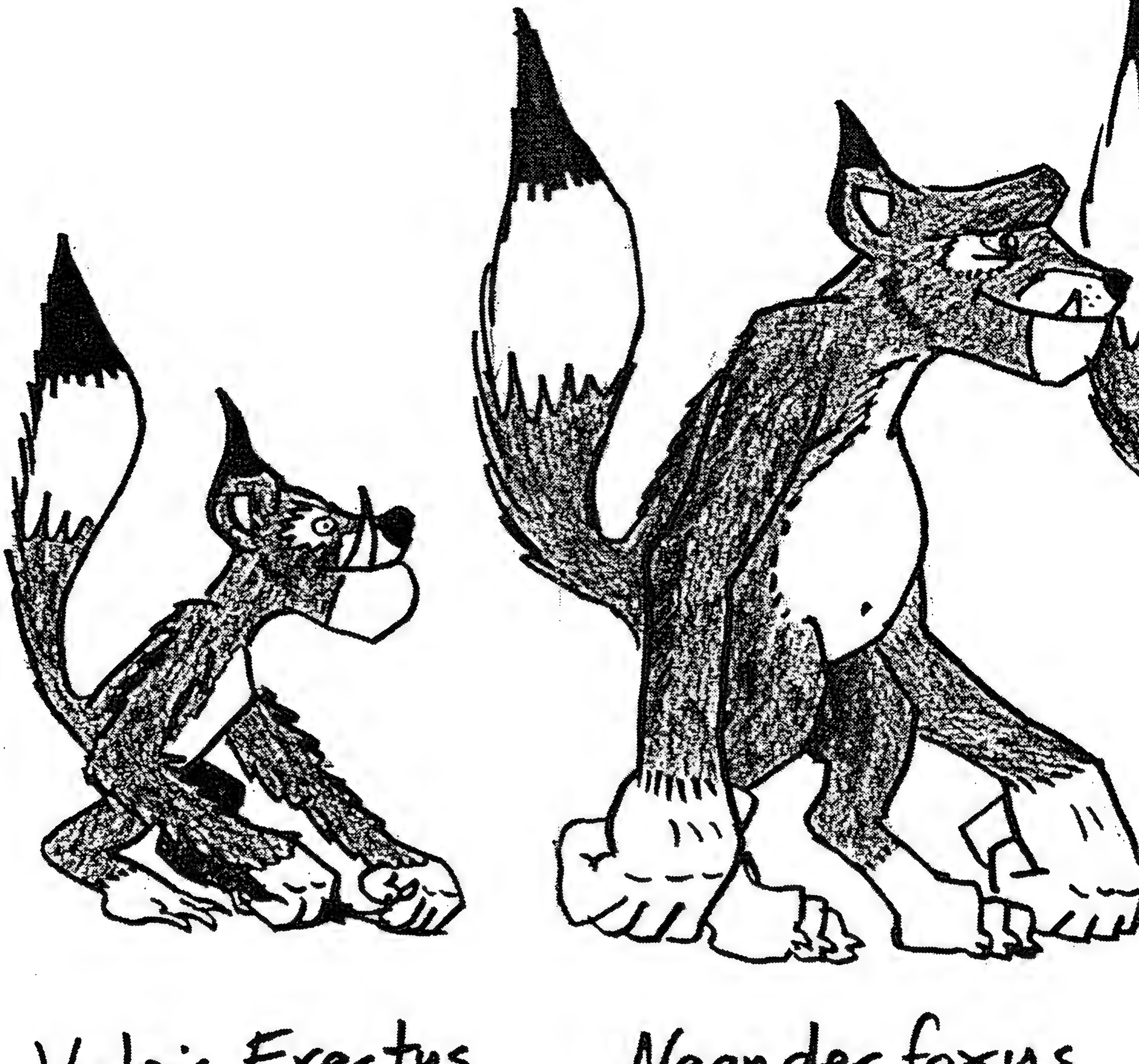
"Come on, I'll race you guys to that tree over there," and with a shout shi was off. The children took off after hir immediately, running to catch up as shi led them in the chase. About halfway there shi slowed hir pace, letting them catch up to hir. Giving them a good race to the tree, shi let a couple of them, the human boy and a slightly-older raccoon girl, beat hir.

It was soon decided that their new friend should play a few rounds of tag with them. As shi was caught up in the game, Ambereyes felt hir smile growing a little wider across hir muzzle. Hir happiness still tinged with hir loss, shi also knew that shi could not deny hirself the possibility of experiencing those joys cubs of hir own in the future. Shi couldn't let it cripple hir for the rest of hir life, Swiftpounce wouldn't have wanted that.

Perhaps the next transport ship just might have a few chakats on board it after all. The members of hir race were highly sought-after as off-world contract workers, since their strength and versatility were perfect for this and many other types of jobs. It would take time to get over hir loss, and shi'd never forget what shi'd had with hir mate, but it was time to move on. Shi needed to make new friends who could help hir through the grieving process.

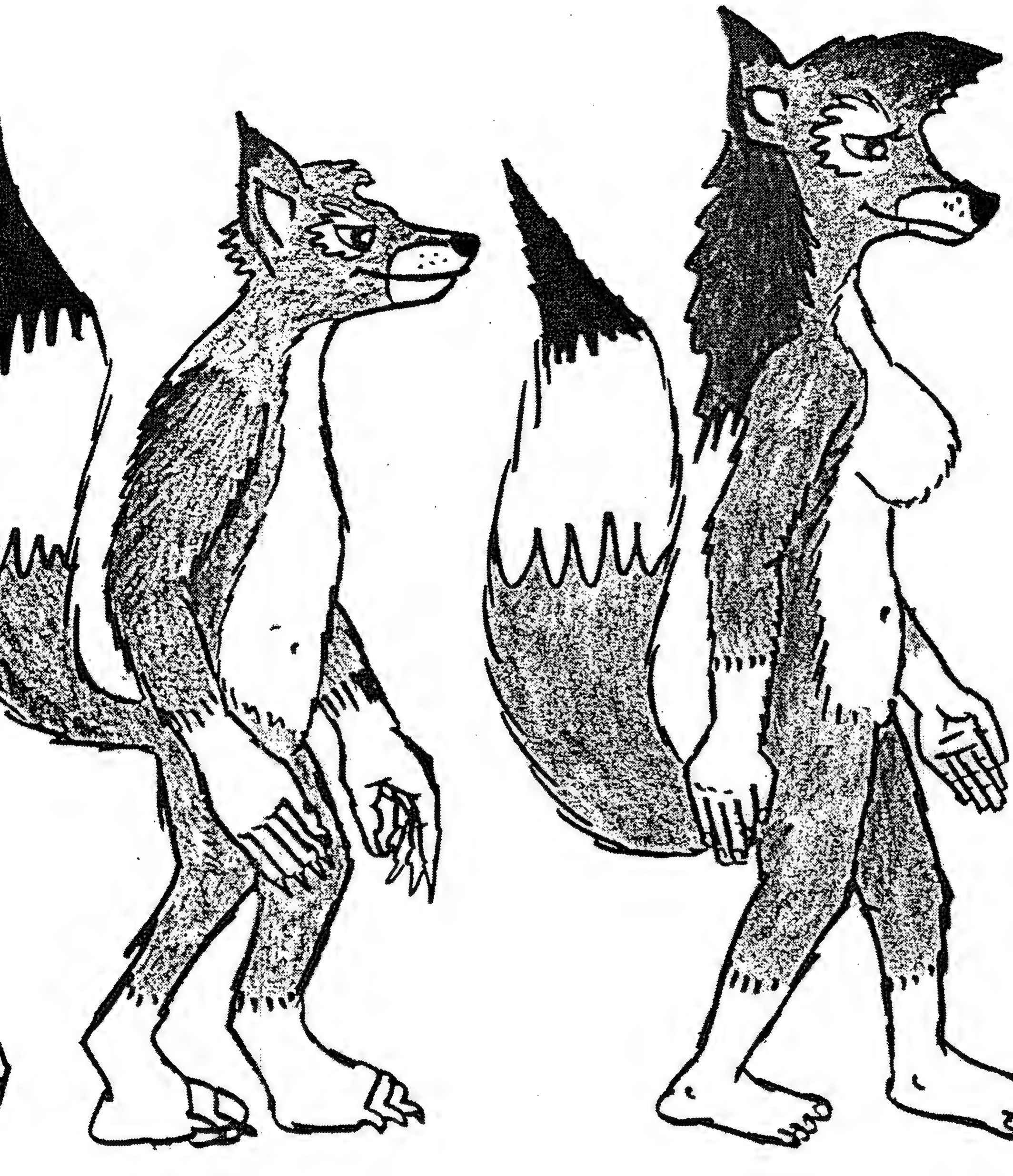
As shi played with the children on the playground, shi felt the faint glimmer of hope flicker to life within hir once again. Chasing after the kids in their game shi felt hir eyes watering lightly once again, but was content to ignored it as shi focused hir attention on the task at hand.

Evolution of the Species.



Vulpis Erectus

Neanderfoxus



Cro Magnon Fox.

Vulpis Sapiens.

DON'T YOU READERS THINK ITS TIME TO DEFINE THE NATURE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP?

BACK OFF 'MR BLATANT'


IT'S A MUSE THING!
what else could it be??
TIME FOR THE VIDEO CAMERA!
I CAN WELL IMAGINE-
GODWELL I CAN TASTE PURPLE!
OHHHHH IT'S HAPPENING TO ME AAAHAAAN!
EEK!



Cool Fox **Marco Morales**

This would be me if I was a fox, but since I ain't, insert the name of your favourite fox there, and we'll all be much happier. The guitar? Well, I tried to hang a piano first, but the strap kept breaking. Must've been imported.



FoxFrenzy

Marco Morales

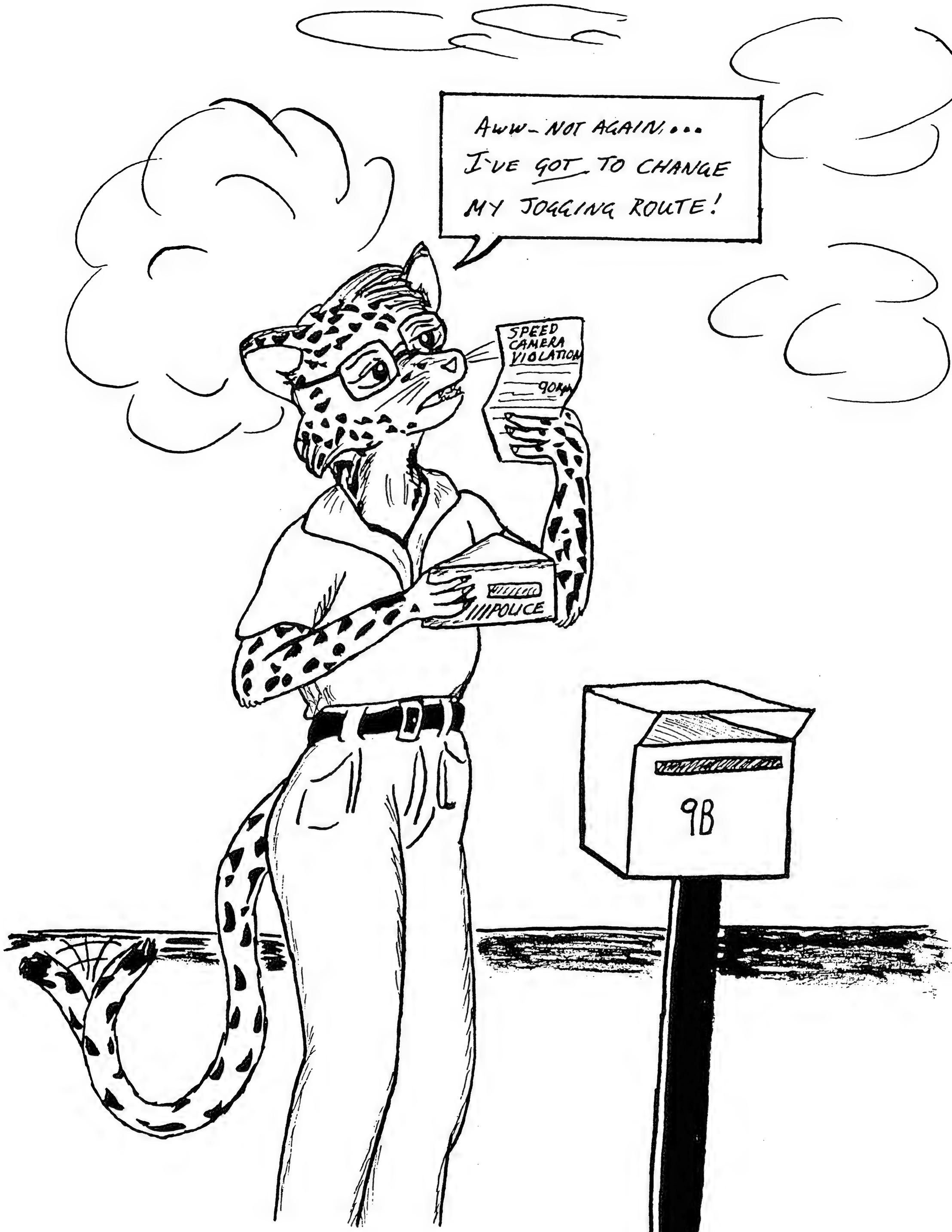
Hiii-yaaa! *splatt!* (Stand still for a second!) Heh, as if! This is FoxFrenzy, and English fur I met a few weeks ago, and couldn't stand still for a second. The fact that *I* can't stand still for a second either, made it really hard to draw this… so appreciate it while you can!



Andrew Leitch

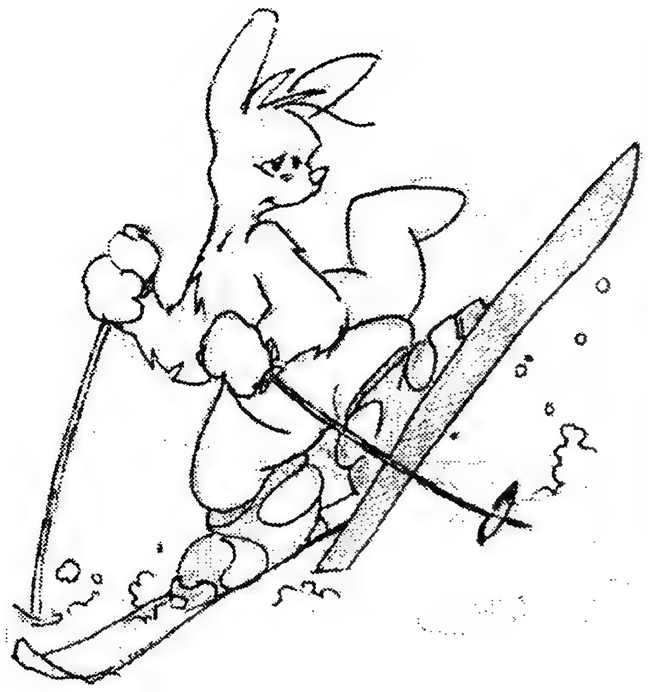
The paramilitary kitty is "Darscenii", second in command of a superhero team called the Sentinels from a long running *Champions* game I was in. Martial artist extraordinaire—mistress of the ancient art of Nekokai Taijutsu. The drawing was an experiment I did in learning Shirow Masamune's cartooning style.

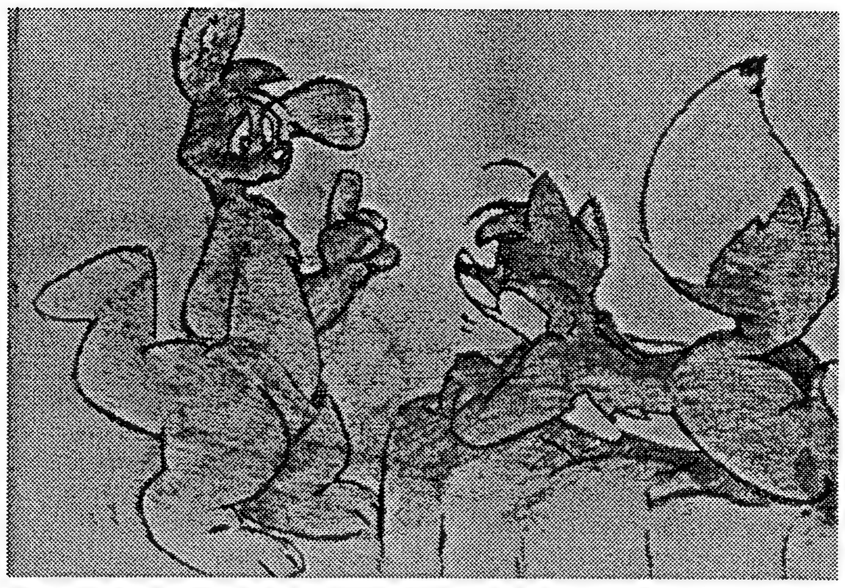




LINDGOLD © GRANT PRESTON

TK 11/96







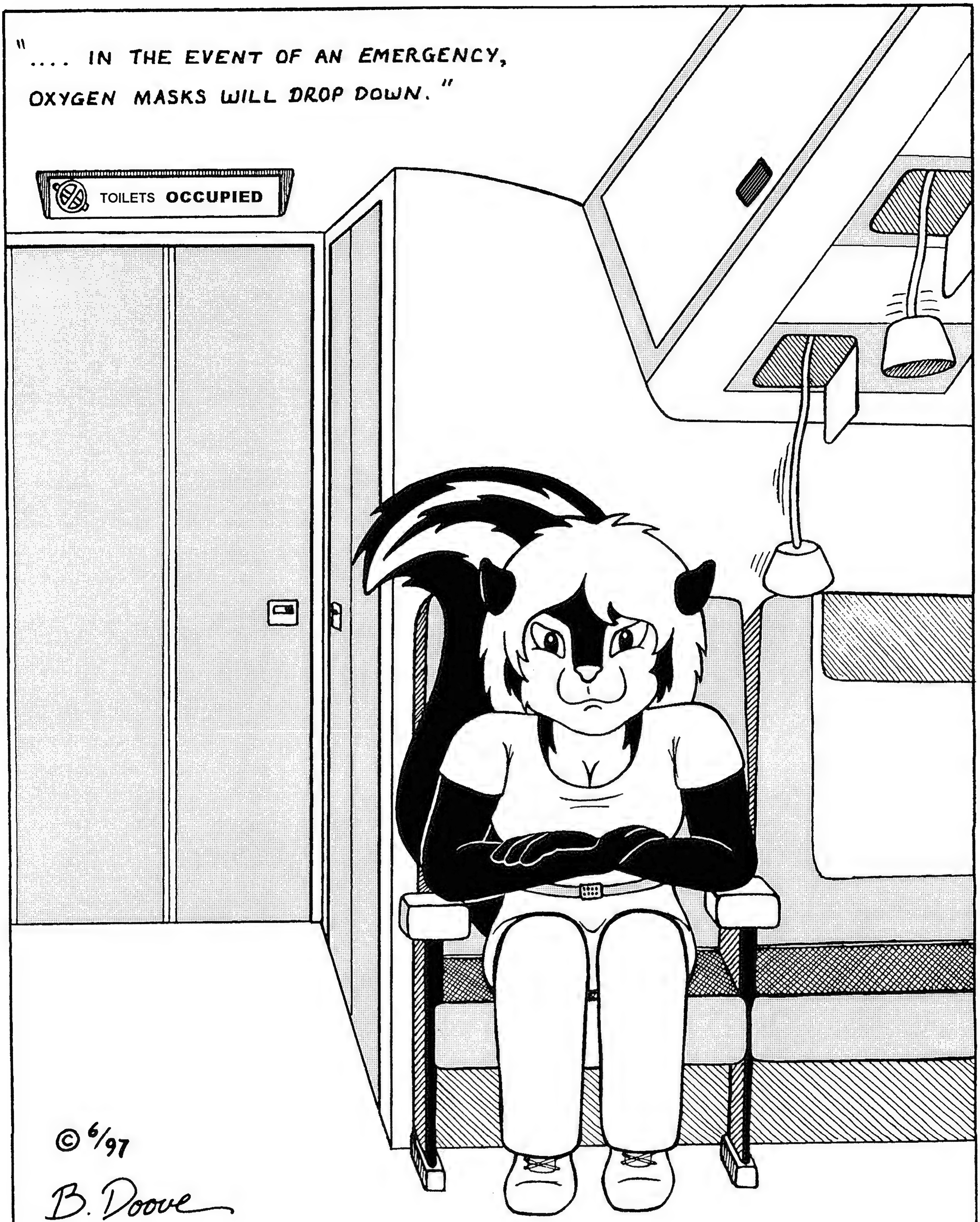
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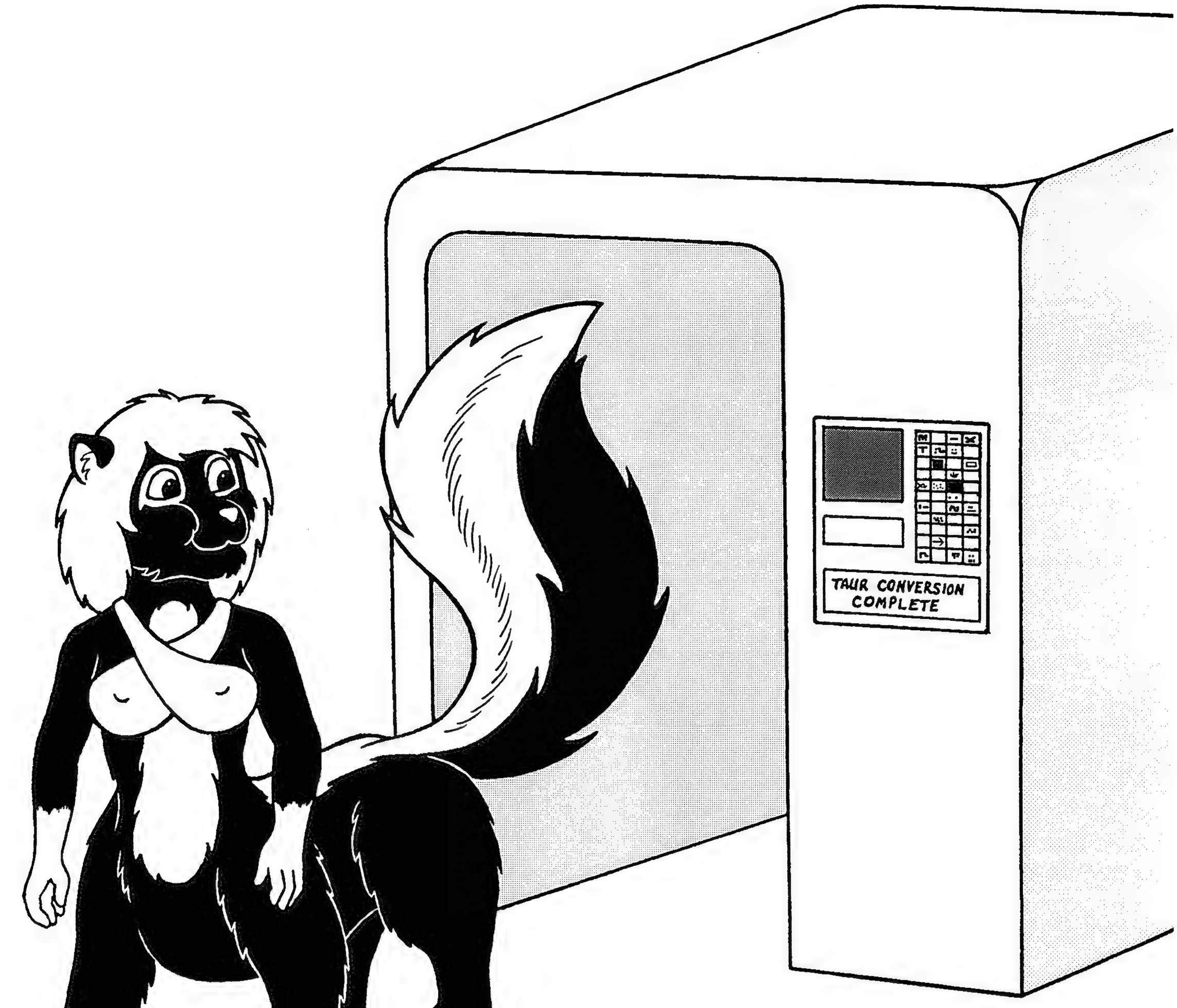






OXYGEN **Bernard Doove**

Our travelling skunkette encounters her first problem on her journey to Australia. The oxygen masks have dropped and they haven't even left the ground! She hasn't done anything to deserve this treatment and, understandably, she's getting rather aggravated. Hmmm, they might need those masks after all!



SKUNKTAUR **Bernard Doove**

When Marie the skunkette saw what had happened to Haal when he transmogrified himself into a taurform, she thought it was pretty cool. She came to me and asked if she could try out the CTT [Chakat Taur Transmogrifier™]. She seems pretty happy with the result.

TAIL HIGH, CREEP! **Bernard Doove**

(overleaf)

A skunkette travelling in Australia falls afoul of a local mugger. Unfortunately for him, he's not familiar with her species, but soon learns not to mess with her kind. (The mugger was supposed to be a dingo, but I gave him a bushy tail which dingos don't have. D'OH!)


© 4/97 B. Doove


"TALLULAH CREEP!"

Peddling their Wares...

Furries Against Driving Drunk was started July 25, 1996 at around 10:30 by our Founder and President, Keet. What follows is a brief form and agreement. This group is totally against driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or narcotics. FADD is for everyone and anyone who wishes to join the drinking and driving counter-attack. Please complete it and return it to one of the addresses at the bottom of this paragraph, so you will be added. Thank you for your time, Michael Thompson (FADD Membership Director).

FADD web site: **http://localsonly.wilmington.net/~keetnet/fadd.html**

Michael Thompson: ***hyack@hotmail.com*** Keet: ***keetnet@wilmington.net***

Mail to: **FADD**
c/o Michael Thompson
717 5th Street
New Westminster, BC
Canada, V3L 2Y2

E-mail to: ***hyack@hotmail.com***
Subject: **FADD**

Contact me for <u>any</u> help you need.

Furry Name/Handle:_____

*Real Name:_____

E-Mail Address:_____
If you do not have an e-mail address, just put on the line above or "NO E-MAIL" your home or mailing address. We would like to keep in contact with you for the newsletter and changes in FADD.
Would like the address posted?: yes_____ no_____ (e-mail only at this time)

*Web Site:_____ Would like it posted?: yes____ no____
Do you drive (real life)?: yes _____ no _____ *Does your furry drive?: yes_____ no_____
*Do you draw or write? yes____ no____ Specify:_____

I, _____, by signing this contract agree to not let myself or any of my friends or relatives drive under the influence of alcohol or other impairing substances in real life or in character.

Signature: _____
* optional information
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Snorty © Brett Tamahori
Amara © Amy Provost

AMARA THE ~~PSYCHO~~ PHYSIOVIXEN!

1K 9/96